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National Council of the
Churches of Christ in the
Advance in Africa

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Advance in Africa

The Africa Committee
of the Division of Foreign Missions, NCCC

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Advance in Africa

Good News for Today, – the proclamation of the eternal Gospel to the temporal world – is always the proper task of the Church of Christ. As the conditions in which this communication must be made are constantly changing a survey of some characteristics of Africa South of the Sahara is needed for advance. Agencies of Christian cooperative action already exist and are susceptible of development and greater use, among them The Africa Committee with its distinctive role and functions. Some major current problems require particular attention and help to determine future concerns.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF PRESENT DAY AFRICA.

THE POLITICAL PATTERN.

(See maps, pages 10 and 11) Africa with a population of some 220,000,000, is the last great area of the world in which colonial patterns still predominate. Only nine of its forty odd countries have achieved self-government. In the Union of South Africa, self-government really means the domination of the African majority by the European minority; and there is strong internal pressure in some other areas (e.g. Rhodesia and Kenya) to develop similar patterns of white domination. Countries which are moving toward independence (e.g. British West Africa) are hampered by the paucity and inexperience of leaders, by the inadequacy of existing tribal and cultural patterns, by language barriers and lack of communications, by the want of developed resources and industries on which to base adequate national economies, and by a general lack of specialists and technicians in every domain. Despite these handicaps progress is being made in Africa comparable to that of emergent nations elsewhere. Ghana achieved her independence on March 6, 1957, and the emergence of this new African state has a significance for the whole continent.

Much of Africa however, is dominated by European powers which believe their African territories are not ready to become autonomous. *Belgian* authorities recognize that they must cultivate the willingness of the peoples of Congo to accept them as partners and helpers.

Attention is being given to material welfare and African advancement; secondary and university education have been begun. *France* has attempted to make the French Union a living reality in which African peoples would enjoy increasing civil rights and find growing satisfaction in the enjoyment of French civilization. Since this philosophy of assimilation allows little scope for the recognition of African cultural values, it tends to polarize the population between traditionalists on the one hand and the detribalized on the other. This does not promote the development of a strong homogeneous nationhood. The Basic-Law of June 23, 1956, apparently envisages a development of the French Union into a truly federal organization. *Portugal* regards its African dependencies as overseas provinces. It extends relatively full recognition and rights to the few Africans who accept Portuguese culture, language and way of life in their entirety, and who achieve legal recognition as 'citizens;' it accords the status of natives to the rest of the population. There is no expectation of nationhood based on the cultural heritage of African peoples, for it is intended that they shall be absorbed into Portuguese civilization.

THE MARCH OF SELF-GOVERNMENT

These differing political patterns exist in neighboring territories, between which there is a growing interchange of peoples – a movement most marked in the case of hundreds and thousands of migrant workers in the mines and industries of Southern Africa. These divergent patterns cannot be indefinitely maintained. Nor is Africa immune to influences from the outside world. Asiatic nations, where anti-colonial sentiment runs strong, express themselves in the public forum afforded by the Trusteeship Division of the United Nations and the General Assembly. In the face of these mounting pressures, political patterns in Africa must be expected to change with increasing frequency and suddenness. Whether each change will be peaceable or violent no one can forsee. The worldwide interest in Ghana's change of status, symbolized by the visit of delegates from sixty-two nations, including the Vice-President of the United States of America, cannot fail to stimulate political progress all over the continent. Dr. Nkrumah's projected conference of independent African states shows that Ghana will not play a passive role; and Mr. Strijdom's polite refusal of the invitation and his counter-proposal of a wider African conference demonstrates that South Africa recognizes the emergence of a new

power. If Nigeria with its population of 31,000,000 (which makes it by far the most populous country in Africa, not excluding Egypt or the Union of South Africa) can achieve independence soon, and still remain united, the march to self-government will be speeded up even more.

RACE RELATIONS—COOPERATION OR CONFLICT?

In many parts of Africa race relations are at a point of crisis. Broadly speaking, tension follows the population ratio; the greater the proportion of non-Africans in a territory the more acute the race problem. On the West coast which has never been an area of European settlement, the transfer of political and economic power from European to African hands has begun. At the other extreme the government policy in the Union of South Africa increasingly restricts the freedom of Africans, Asiatics and Colored people. It is an attempt to put into practice a sincerely held theory of racial separation which nevertheless, runs counter to the basic fact of mutual dependence and the general opinion of mankind. As in the American southland before the Civil War, race discrimination in the Union had been buttressed by a perverted Biblical exegesis, still widely accepted in the Dutch Reformed communion, which is only now beginning to be challenged by some of that church's leading theologians. The conflict of aims between churches using the Dutch and English languages has limited cooperation and lessened the influence of the churches in race relations. In practice many English speaking South Africans follow policies of white supremacy, despite the more liberal pronouncements of their churches.

An influential minority of the white population of Rhodesia shares the South African Nationalist viewpoint. White supremacy has also been the goal of many Kenya settlers; though the Mau Mau uprising brought a rude awakening. In both territories more liberal policies, looking to the development of an integrated multiracial society, are emerging. The Capricorn Africa Society is an attempt to plan and build the political framework of such a society with full interracial cooperation. It has not, however, yet won too much white support and is viewed with suspicion by some of the more articulate Africans as merely a new way of domination.

RAPID SOCIAL CHANGE

Africa is emerging with startling rapidity from isolation, animism, and primitive culture into complete involvement in the technological

life of the western world. Peoples are passing overnight from hoe to tractor, from human porterage to the automobile and airplane, from village forge to mine shelter, from handicrafts to factory assembly lines. Tens of thousands of men migrate every year to and from the mines and plantations; thousands more forsake the ordered traditional life of the villages to make their homes in the teeming locations and slums of the mushrooming towns and cities.

Despite numerous studies of these developments, it is doubtful whether Protestant churches have yet grasped the immensity of the changes that are taking place. For the most part, churches and missions are captives of their own numerical success in rural areas, with little more than a marginal concern for the cities. It is true that villages are the headwaters of the streams that reach the towns and all too little has yet been accomplished in applying the Gospel to the whole of life even in the rural areas. Yet it is in the cities and industrial centers that the most critical social and moral pressures are found; it is here that myriads of uprooted persons stand in need of the ministrations of Christian love; and it is here that Africans are painfully reshaping for themselves new patterns of life and fellowship. Here the church is challenged to the greatest fresh new pioneering outreach in this generation, while not leaving the roots in the rural areas untended.

THE LIFE AND LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH

With the exception of Muslim peoples, Africans have generally been responsive to the Christian message. Not only scattered individuals but whole communities have accepted the Gospel often with profound sincerity and commitment. Often the movement into the church has outrun the rate at which the meaning of Christianity for the remolding of man and society could be experienced, explored, and brought to bear on community life. (In this the African church resembles medieval European churches.) As a result, in Africa there is an alarming amount of "baptized paganism" i.e. church members of the second, third and fourth generations with little or no experience of personal regeneration, and not always distinguishable from the pagans around them. At times the church appears to be concerned with ceremonial, ecclesiastical preferment and sectarian rivalries more than with the deeper issues of brotherly love, integrity, forbearance, and devotion to the common good, with commitment to Christ, and living as a Christian community. Yet within the church

there are individuals and small groups in whom the Holy Spirit is profoundly at work; and the influence of the Gospel is certainly one of the formative influences in the life of Africa today.

The fact that Africa was illiterate, with hundreds of different spoken languages, entailed a heavy task of general education between the first proclamation of the Gospel and the development of a well trained African ministry. It was sensible in the early days to use Christian leaders wise in the ways of their own people and give them such rudimentary training as the missionaries could provide. As the Word spread and congregations multiplied the crisis of leadership became more acute and the actual training of the average village worker increasingly fell short of a standard demanded by the tasks entrusted to him. The thin stream of trained clergymen coming out of the schools falls so far short of the numbers needed to serve the whole Church with regularity that these few are either desperately overloaded with itinerant pastoral duties or absorbed in administrative functions. The lack of living examples of clergymen who are effective and respected leaders in their communities, especially in the cities, tends to bring the vocation into contempt and further reduce the number of capable and forward looking young people who come forward as candidates.

Because of this lack of indigenous leadership, the African church is not making its full contribution to that radical reshaping of African life and society which is now in process. Ministers who do not themselves understand what is taking place and who have not grasped the relevance of the Christian Gospel thereto, are hardly in a position to give wise leadership in unfamiliar situations or to inspire young people of the rising generation. The African church remains pietistically quiescent amid changes, following traditions derived more largely from Europe than from Africa. Training schools for the African ministry have followed the programs, already partly outmoded, of their European and American prototypes. Rarely has the question been asked *"What does it mean to be a Christian minister in Africa today?"* Scarcely anywhere as yet is there an effort to provide training for service in the city as contrasted with the country, or to train specialists in young peoples' work, religious education, and social welfare. The present state of the African church and of the recruiting, training and professional guidance of its ministry, should be a matter of the gravest concern to every mission, mission board and church.

AGENCIES OF CHRISTIAN COOPERATIVE ACTION

It is clear that issues as wide and deep as those mentioned above cannot be adequately dealt with by any single church or missionary body working in isolation. All the resources of wisdom, strength and grace which God has given to the diverse members of His Church must be brought together. Fortunately in some areas there is a long record of cooperation. The earliest mission stations became resting points along the way for those who, coming later, pressed forward farther into the interior. General missionary conferences maintained the tradition of mutual helpfulness and provided a forum for sharing concerns and planning together. After the great Edinburgh Conference in 1910 inter-mission continuation committees were established in several African territories, as in other parts of the world; and out of these, and later movements of the same kind, has come the cooperative structure of the present day. At no point has this structure been elaborated to fill up gaps in some organizational chart; every part has been developed in response to an urgently felt need.

AREA CHRISTIAN COUNCILS IN AFRICA

At present there are sixteen distinct Christian Councils or similar bodies in Africa, in addition to the Ruanda-Urundi Alliance (which is a subsidiary of the Congo Protestant Council) and to the Committee on Reference and Counsel in Liberia. A list of the Councils and their Secretaries appears in the January issue of the *International Review of Missions* each year.

The Councils vary greatly in importance and effectiveness. Where the missions have been forced to stand together in the face of a hostile politico-religious environment relatively strong Councils have resulted. This was true in Congo and in Angola, and increasingly so in Mozambique. The Mau Mau uprising in Kenya has confronted the churches with urgent tasks of reconciliation and leadership which have tested and enhanced the strength of the Christian Council. Where there has been greater freedom, as in most British territories, sectarian separatism has not always been counter-balanced by any urgent sense of need to work together. Governments however, have felt the need for communicating with mission and church bodies, especially in the field of education. Most British territories have had Advisory Committees on Native Education with mission representation. (It is noteworthy that this plan developed

largely as a result of the Phelps-Stokes surveys of education in Africa, and through the initiative of Dr. J.H. Oldham.) French West Africa also has a Protestant educational supervisor. Missionary Conferences and Christian Councils have been stimulated in their development by practical necessities of working together with governments in the fields of education and welfare.

Under the impulse of Dr. John R. Mott's visit to South Africa in 1934, a Christian Council was formed in the Union; but it proved unable to reconcile the divergent views and susceptibilities of its members. The Dutch Reformed Churches withdrew. Despite its relative weakness, the Council has been active and forthright in dealing with questions of public policy. First steps toward a possible reconciliation were taken in conferences brought together on the initiative of Dutch Reformed Churches in 1953 and 1954.

Most of the Councils began as missionary bodies. There was little or no representation of the African Churches. In a few Councils, notably Ghana, constitutional provision was made from the outset for representation of both missions and churches. In other areas, (e.g. Southern Rhodesia) separate consultative bodies representing the emergent African churches were established, and later consolidated with missionary bodies to form more inclusive conferences or councils. In Ethiopia the separate bodies still exist, consolidation has not taken place. In still other instances (e.g. Belgian Congo) missionary councils have reorganized themselves to include African representation. In Belgian Congo, Angola, and Mozambique the Councils took the initiative in projecting united African churches, the Church of Christ in Congo, Angola, and Mozambique respectively. In each area a common name was adopted and exchange of members is the accepted practice, but this has not precluded the development within the different segments of the nominally united regional church of diverse polities and ecclesiastical structures, modelled on those of the parent churches. No serious attempt has yet been made to promote the development within any of these three bodies of an inclusive church polity. Advance toward genuine automony in these fields appears to be inhibited by unwillingness either to undo the step already taken and revert frankly to a denominational pattern, or to move forward in providing the nominally united church with a living structure. No doubt it is felt that the already existing cooperation might be jeopardized by any change in polity. It should be noted however, that in several areas Africans are already in a majority in the governing church bodies.

INTERBOARD AGENCIES.

No African territory, except perhaps Uganda, is served exclusively by missions of a single denominational or national origin. Pooled plans and policies must therefore be cleared with those of supporting bodies in many countries, and policy formulation involves interboard and international consultation as well as discussion and agreement in the field. The Africa Committee serving North America and its parallel in Great Britain are the most explicit agencies for this purpose. Other countries with fewer boards working in Africa have missionary councils without special committees for Africa. One of the basic functions of these committees and councils is to serve as links in a chain of communication, so that agencies all around the world with the same aims and purposes in view, and confronted with the same emergent situations, share a common intelligence and act together.

THE INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL.

This network of intercommunication finds its natural focus in the International Missionary Council. Its meetings not only permit the discussion of common problems but also establish links of personal acquaintance which are essential to the most effective working together. Between meetings the officers and staff promote communication and help member bodies give priority to the issues of greatest importance to the whole Church. Through its own studies and through its capacity to interpret world developments the International Missionary Council contributes to the effectiveness of the whole Christian movement. In a different but very real sense, the life of the International Missionary Council consists not so much in the activity centering in its own offices as in the whole network of communication continually taking place among its members and related bodies. Thus the whole process of communication in which the Africa Committee and the entire Division of Foreign Missions are constantly engaged is part of the life and function of the International Missionary Council. From this standpoint it is clearly necessary to maintain systematic clearance with the International Missionary Council offices, so that matters of general importance do not remain unreported at the center.

LIAISON CENTERS IN EUROPE

Missionaries who expect to serve in French, Belgian or Portuguese Africa have to learn the language and become acquainted with the

culture and colonial policies of the administering power. A period of residence in Europe is therefore part of their preparation. An important cooperative service is the provision of experienced Protestant representatives to welcome arriving missionaries, assist them in arrangements and relationships, guide their studies, and provide centers of Christian fellowship for them. These representatives also maintain liaison and promote understanding both with government and with Protestant churches and people. The centers in Brussels, Paris and Lisbon are supported cooperatively by the mission boards making use of them, particularly boards in Scandinavia, Great Britain and the United States. As North Americans preponderate the New York Office carries a major share of responsibility for them in consultation with the British and Scandinavian committees.

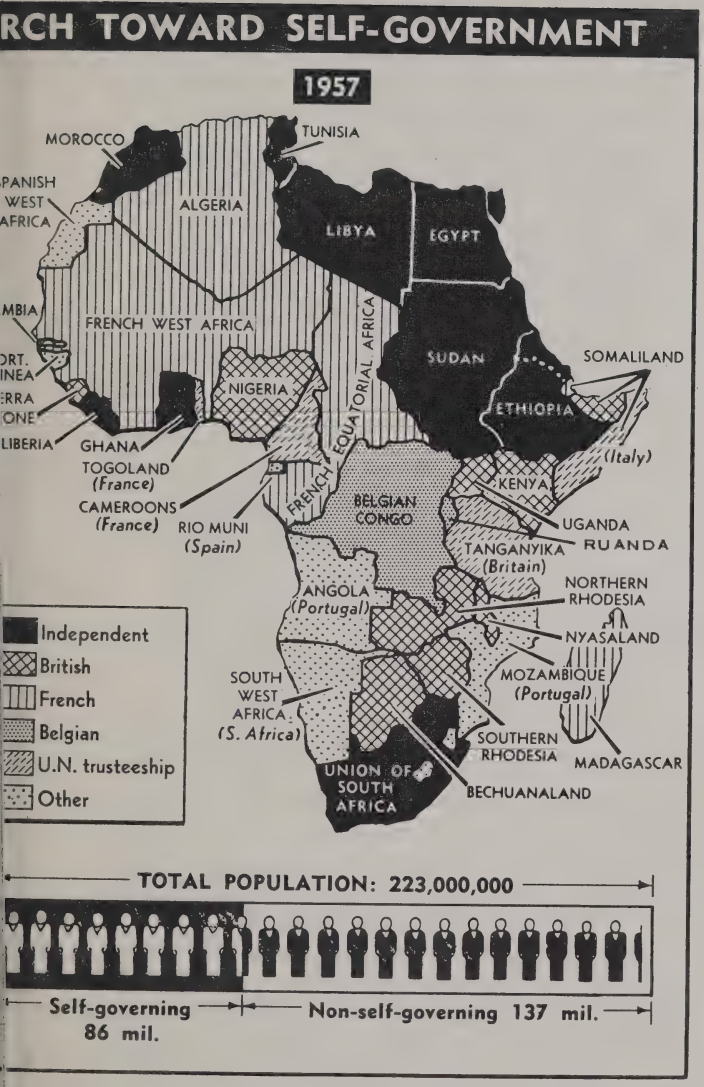
THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE AFRICA COMMITTEE.

It might be logical to distinguish between membership and staff functions of the Africa Committee, i.e., between what it does as a group of mission board representatives meeting periodically on the one hand, and what it does through its Secretariat working throughout the year on the other. But in practice these two types of function interact. At each meeting of the Committee the staff reports on all aspects of work in hand, the Committee brings to bear the experience of its members and instructs the Secretariat on further action and new undertakings. There is also a continuous interchange be- the members of the Committee and the staff through correspondence, circulars, and consultations. Active participation by all members, both in the discussions at meetings and by correspondence and consultation is needed for effective work.

The functions of the Africa Committee in this broad sense, i.e., membership and staff working together, embrace at least the following activities:

1. Mutual sharing of information on the constantly changing situation throughout Africa, especially in its bearings on the life and witness of the Christian Church.
2. Joint consideration of policy and planning in order to promote harmony and effectiveness.
3. Inquiry and research, as a guide to planning.
4. Planning, development and administration of joint projects within the committee's responsibility and competence.

AFRICA IN 1914 AND 1957—THE
1914
SP. MOROCCO
ALGERIA
RIO DE ORO (Spain)
TRIPOLI (Italy)
EGYPT
FRENCH WEST AFRICA
ERITREA (Italy)
GAMBIA
FR. SOMALILAN
BR. SOMALILAN
ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SUDAN
PORT. GUINEA
NIGERIA
ABYSSINIA
SIERRA LEONE
LIBERIA
GOLD COAST
TOGOLAND
CAMEROONS
EAST AFRICA
IT. SOMALILAN
RIO MUNI (Spain)
BELGIAN CONGO
UGANDA
FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA
GERMAN EAST AFRICA
ANGOLA (Portugal)
RHODESIA
NYASALAND
Independent
British
French
German
Belgian
Other
GERMAN WEST AFRICA
MOZAMBIQUE (Portugal)
MADAGASCAR
UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA
BECHUANALAND
TOTAL POPULATION: 170,000,000
Non-self-governing 164.5 mil.
Self-governing 5.5 mil.



Maps – Courtesy of The New York Times

5. Liaison in the foregoing matters with functional committees of the Division of Foreign Missions, namely, the Christian Medical Council for Overseas Work, the Radio, Visual Education and Mass Communications Committee (RAVEMCCO), Rural Missions Cooperating Committee, Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature, and the Missionary Research Library, with other units of The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America; with the International Missionary Council and the International Committee on Literature for Africa, (ICCLA); with the British, European and other missionary agencies, including the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association and the Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association; and with the Christian Councils, mission and church bodies in Africa.
6. Help and counsel to the Christian Councils in Africa in cooperation with the International Missionary Council.
7. Aid to the missionary orientation centers in Europe (Brussels, Lisbon and Paris).
8. Help and counsel in promoting satisfactory relations with governments, maintaining religious liberty, and assuring free dom of action to church and mission personnel.
9. Relations with academic bodies, foundations, and other agencies having African interests.
10. Counsel and assistance to students and visitors from Africa, and to other persons and organizations having interests similar to those of the Committee.
11. Administration and control of funds entrusted to the Committee for the above purposes.

To perform his functions effectively it is essential that the Executive Secretary of the Committee maintain personal contact with Africa through fairly frequent visitation. The Committee as a whole should also benefit from field visitation by its members through reports and discussion; and should be able from time to time to entrust particular interests to members visiting Africa in the course of their own duties.

MAJOR CURRENT PROBLEMS

MINISTERIAL TRAINING

African delegates at the 1938 meeting of the International Mission-

ary Council at Madras asked for a survey of the training of the ministry in Africa. The International Missionary Council arranged for four teams to cover Africa and published the reports. The first, in 1950, covering British East and West Africa, was written by Bishop Stephen Neill. The second, in 1953 was edited by Dr. M. Searle Bates and dealt with French, Belgian and Portuguese Africa and Liberia. Also in 1953 Dr. Norman Goodall surveyed South Africa and Rhodesia. In 1956 Dr. Charles W. Ranson, Professor Michaeli, Dr. Birkeli and Rev. T. Rasendrahasina surveyed Madagascar.

In order to meet needs pointed out by the survey, The Methodist Board of Missions gave the Africa Committee $50,000, to be used with such funds as might be received from some other boards, to promote advance in ministerial training in Africa. With the concurrence of the Africa Committee in London, our Committee created a Commission on Ministerial Training with these terms of reference:

> The Commission shall undertake to stimulate and initiate joint action to implement the recommendations of the Survey of the Training of the Ministry in Africa and to promote continuing united advance in this field.
>
> The Commission shall work in full collaboration with the similar body appointed by the Conference of British Missionary Societies, and in consultation with the Christian Councils in Africa, training institutions and other appropriate agencies.

Union Seminaries will begin in 1957 in Mozambique and Angola. Southern Rhodesia is looking forward to giving higher theological training near the new University College at Salisbury. Belgian Congo, French Equatorial Africa and Cameroun are engaged in consultations with a view to union institutions for French-speaking Africa. Ghana, too, is discussing joint theological training.

For the consultative process, which usually includes travel and allowances for special consultants from outside Africa, the North American Commission is requesting from its member boards a budget of $10,000 a year, and the British Committee is seeking £2,000 a year. It is anticipated that substantially greater amounts will be required to carry forward needed developments as plans take form, but it is expected that the churches and missionary agencies most directly interested in each project will, in the main, provide the continuing support, with initial aid from the Commission where necessary.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

In the past, elementary education through day schools and boarding schools has in Africa been largely in the hands of Christian missions. Religious education has had an important place in these schools, so the need for strong Sunday School programs has not been widely felt. Today governments are undertaking an increasing share of primary education in many parts of Africa. In South Africa the schools have been taken entirely out of the hands of the churches and missions. In other countries systems of secular schools paralleling those conducted by the missions are assuming greater importance. Hence, for ever increasing numbers of Africans, religious education must be provided through agencies other than the schools. The Sunday School thus gains even more importance.

Recognizing this trend, the World Council of Christian Education proposed to the Africa Committee that a series of conferences be held in Africa in order to discover how best to plan and provide Sunday School lesson materials specifically adapted to African needs. In the light of these results, and of the detailed recommendations of the conferences, preparation of the needed materials has begun. An editorial staff has been named and seconded to the task, a preliminary workshop including representatives from nearly all the areas concerned has met, detailed plans have been drawn up, and the process of drafting has begun.

A special budget for this project has been submitted to Africa Committee and approved. Questions of publication, translation, and --not least--of teacher training in modern Sunday School methods adapted to African needs, will arise as the work progresses. Continuing collaboration between the British and American Africa Committees, the World Council of Christian Education and Sunday School Association, Christian literature agencies and other bodies will be necessary to the satisfactory development of this program.

DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE PROGRAMS AND AGENCIES

The policy of the International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa, of which the Africa Committee is the North American section, is to promote the development of field literature agencies, related to the Christian Councils in Africa so that initiative and leadership will lie with them. Field agencies should more and more assume responsibility for Christian literature activities without con-

stant stimulation by the International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa. As this process takes place many of the present activities of the London office should become redundant. Field personnel will take them over. Such activities as remain can be conducted by the Secretariats of the two Africa Committees in collaboration with the Christian Literature Council in London and the Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature in New York, and representatives of European churches.

STUDIES IN AFRICA OF "CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD AREAS OF RAPID SOCIAL CHANGE."

Studies under the World Council of Church's plan are being developed in Liberia, Ghana, Kenya, the Cameroons, the Copper Belt of Northern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa. What their response should be to politics is a big question now to African Christians. The Ghana Christian Council is playing a leading role in developing a serious approach to the problems of independence. In Northern Rhodesia attention is focused on "The Witness of the Christian Community in a Changing Multi-racial Society". Racial tensions spoil all other efforts at social change. One of the greatest is the impact social change is making upon youth. Old standards are gone. When youths go into cities they find few recreational activities, which presents a big opportunity for the churches. It is hoped that a study of the role of the Christian Church in an African industrial city with an inquiry into the implications for ministerial training may also be undertaken. This study ties in naturally with the studies of rapid social change and also with the studies of the life of the church in rural Africa which are sponsored by the International Missionary Council, and in which Rev. John Taylor is engaged. (His first report appeared in I.R.M. April 1957).

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD AFRICA.

Following the Secretary's visit to Africa in 1954, the Committee worked out a basic statement of Christian concern for Africa. It was believed that such a document would be useful not only to the mission societies but also to the churches at large and to American Christians generally. The statement, approved by the African Committee was endorsed by the Executive Board of the Division of Foreign Missions, by the Department of International Affairs, the

Department of Racial and Cultural Relations, and finally by the General Board of the National Council of Churches on June 6, 1956. It is available in pamphlet form under the title "American Christian Responsibility Toward Africa."

As conditions change and new issues emerge the Committee should continue to test the validity and adequacy of its own conclusions. Fresh statements may be necessary either on Africa as a whole or on particular situations or issues. By endorsing this initial statement the General Board has accepted the basic premise that the National Council can and should take a position in respect to the areas of Christian concern with which it deals. The widest use of this document should be encouraged.

ALL–AFRICA CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE.

Regional conferences have been held in various parts of Africa, and three conferences have been held under Christian auspices to consider the whole of sub-Saharan Africa though held outside of the continent itself -- at Le Zoute, Belgium in 1926, at Westerville, Ohio, in 1942, and at Springfield, Ohio, in 1952. In November 1955, the Lutheran World Federation held an All-Africa Lutheran Conference at Marangu, Tanganyika. This gathering led its sponsors to suggest that the International Missionary Council convene an interdenominational All-Africa Conference at an early date. The most convenient plan is to hold such a conference soon after the meeting of the International Missionary Council Assembly which will be held at Accra, Ghana, from December 28, 1957, to January 8, 1958. The International Missionary Council is, accordingly, holding such a conference in Nigeria, in January, 1958. The collaboration of the Africa Committee and its members bodies in holding the conference and in conserving its values will be most important.

THE CHALLENGE OF ISLAM

Another current problem is the encounter of Christianity and Islam. Canon Max Warren has stated the problem succinctly in the Church Missionary Society News-letter. "In those areas where Islam is penetrating among pagan people, as in Africa, the most urgent task is to equip the Church with a thorough understanding of its Gospel and of Islam, and to seek to infuse into that Church a spirit of evangelism. Whatever the shape of things to come such a program would be relevant.

"In areas where Islam is firmly established but which are adjacent to pagan areas, as in Northern Nigeria and the Northern Sudan, there needs to be a far closer link established between those Christian groups which are in direct touch with the dominant Islam and those Christian groups which have been established, or may yet be established, among the neighboring pagans. There is a dangerous amount of departmentalizing among missionaries which tries to draw sharp lines between the evangelism of Muslems and the evangelism of pagans. Understandable in the past when the situation was relatively static, it is irrelevant and dangerous today. "The task of evangelism is one." A rather fuller treatment of "The Christian Church and Islam in West Africa" by Dr. J. Spencer Trimingham is to be found in the International Missionary Council's Research Pamphlet number 3. Another valuable pamphlet, "How Christian is Africa?", by Roland Oliver, also refers to the impact of Islam in East Africa, as well as facing many current missionary problems in Africa. Since these two pamphlets are readily available for those interested no further discussion of the immensely important problem of Islam is offered here.

FUTURE CONCERNS

The above listing of current major concerns of the Africa Committee is not exhaustive. Many other matters of more localized interest occupy the attention of the Committee and its staff for longer or shorter periods. But attention should be focussed chiefly on the major emergent concerns which will demand priority if the Committee is to provide creative leadership in the years just ahead. Among these are the following:

THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

The primary task of the Church is to witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This is the task of the whole Church, and every member of the Church is called to witness in the whole of his own life and in the particular situation in which he finds himself day by day. In Africa as elsewhere, the Church is strong just so far as it is a witnessing church. All too often the witness does not take place as it should, partly because the Western cleavage of life into secular and sacred segments has been carried over into Africa. Along with this the calling to Christian witness has been profes-

sionalized and conceived as the special vocation of missionaries and clergy, something lying entirely outside the daily interests of common people. And as people have been pulled away from long familiar ways of tribe and village and set down all unprepared in the highly individualized life of the cities, the message of the Gospel has tended more and more to recede into irrelevancy. Studies now in progress show that the lack of close contact with missionaries which has followed inevitably as the Church has grown in numbers, and which has not been counterbalanced by adequate pastoral ministrations by qualified ministers, has brought about an alarming attenuation of Christian knowledge and experience.

Hence the provision of more adequate leadership for the Christian Church--more adequate both in numbers, in quality, and in preparation--must remain the first priority. To equip this leadership requires a deeper understanding of the basic question: "*What does it mean to be a Christian minister in Africa today?*" This question must continue to be asked and studied and throughout Africa clergy and lay leaders and missionaries within the Church must unite in seeking and applying the answer.

The Church in Africa must grow not only in extent and in apprehension of the Gospel, but also in autonomy and responsibility. The various Churches in Africa are at very different stages of growth. There is also a startling diversity of relations between the missionary, the mission and the church. Testimony is not wanting that in some instances the investment of an African church with autonomy has been more apparent than real. Missionaries have been unwilling or unable to divest themselves of long established habits of taking the lead. The resultant tensions have thus far been less critical in Africa than in other parts of the world. It may be an important function of the Africa Committee to draw upon experience elsewhere in order to sharpen the concern of its members and their field staffs in the development of fully responsible churches in Africa.

Theological and sociological thought tend increasingly to recognize that man does not live in isolation, but that community is a dimension of human existence and of Christian personality. Certainly in Africa the community is a dominant influence in the life of the individual, and the loss of community is one of the most devastating aspects of social change. The application of an adequate Christian doctrine of man-in-community as a basic postulate

of Christian action, especially in the cities of Africa, should be the concern of forward looking missionaries. John Taylor's "Christianity and Politics" (Penguin WA 9, 1957) is one such attempt.

The Christian Church in Africa today is fragmented not only by sectarian divisions but also by racial barriers. In areas where the white population is considerable separate congregations usually exist not only for practical convenience (because of place of residence and differences of language), but because the force of social traditions sanctions the practice. "White" churches are apt to feel no concern toward African congregations of the same communion; their energies may rather be directed towards church extension into the newer and less populous European settlements. Christian social responsibility in relation to wages, housing, living conditions, health and human welfare are still regarded by many white Christians in Africa as outside the Church's concern. At most they are grudgingly conceded to be matters in which missionaries may properly have an interest. The basic reorientation of viewpoint on Christian social responsibility which has taken place in the United States during the last half century is overdue in Africa. How the Africa Committee can contribute to it, beyond the making of pronouncements, is not clear; but efforts must continue. Desegregation, improved race relations and advance in social welfare, as areas of Christian concern in America, constitute an important body of witness. Our failures in these areas may be even more important.

Some Negro Americans have served in Africa, but comparatively few. The mission boards that have sent them in the past should increase their efforts to find and train suitable candidates, and the boards that have never sent them should start. One tenth of the population of the United States is a large untapped reservoir of gifts, skill and enthusiasm.

THE MISSION AND THE MISSIONARY

A basic reorientation of function of the foreign missionary in relation to churches that are increasingly conscious of their independence is taking place in other areas. It is less advanced in Africa. One can hardly doubt that the same problems and tensions will arise; in certain areas they are already being felt. However, most missionaries in Africa are still living in relative unawareness of the changes taking place elsewhere. It would seem the

part of wisdom to alert them to these changes, even at some considerable expense, if thereby missions and churches in Africa can be forewarned and so better prepared for the future. To this end it might be advisable to provide for visitation in certain Asiatic and other areas on the part both of missionaries and of mature African Christian leaders. The interchange of Christian leadership between Africa and these other areas, as part of the process of internationalizing the missionary force, should certainly be studied. Africa as well as Asia should be recognized as a source of authentic Christian insights which must be shared with the whole body of the Church throughout the world; and to this end Christian sons and daughters of Africa should be invited with increasing frequency to share in the responsibilities of plenary Christian bodies, to teach in theological institutions in the West, and to inspire and lead in the congregational life of the older churches so long as the exchange does not unduly deplete the leadership in Africa. These are some of the ways in which the sharing of Christian leadership which is exemplified in the missionary movement can be made a two-way process, thereby enhancing the stature, the maturity, and the recognition of the African Church. In all of this, the Africa Committee should participate, together with the entire Division of Foreign Missions and the member boards.

DISTRIBUTION AND USE OF RESOURCES.

There are strong indications that the traditional pattern of missionary action whereby a particular sponsoring board sends out its missionaries to serve a specific geographical sector, independently of any other Christian body, is no longer adequate. Few areas remain unoccupied; the geographical frontier of missionary advance is closing, just as the American frontier closed a generation ago with profound social affects. But the absence of new "unoccupied fields" does not signify the end of outreach or of need. Africa's new cities, for example, present a lively challenge. But to attempt to meet it in the old way, but the introduction of increasing numbers of unrelated missionary bodies, is to court failure. The same resources applied to a coordinated program, planned together and worked out with the whole community in view, with adaptations for the special needs of children, young people, adults, newcomers, and established family groups, and responsive to the emerging sense of new community life, will provide a richer, stronger, more effective Christian witness, and a more vital church.

In another area of concern, there is a great disparity between the resources which different missionary agencies can draw upon in the service of comparable needs. Some can afford to be prodigal in responding to requests for help; others lack even the minimum to do effective work within the areas for which they are responsible. Within limits, austerity rather than prodigality may be wholesome for the growing church. Extremes in either direction are surely harmful. It would appear to be the function of the consultative agencies, of which the Africa Committee is one, to help the boards, missions and churches find ways to equalize these disparities so that the total resources available may contribute most richly to the growth of the Church and the furtherance of the Gospel. A survey of the strength of the churches and possibilities of growth is needed, and a review of the help provided by the older churches.

COOPERATION

Within the near future the question must be seriously faced, both by the churches and missions in Africa and by their supporting bodies whether Christian cooperation is a matter merely of convenience or of principle. The practice of working together and the agencies of cooperation have come into being for reasons of practical necessity. Such measure of belief as there has been in the virtue of cooperation would not have sufficed by itself to overcome the habit of thinking and acting in purely denominational terms. It must, in fact, be frankly recognized that the thought and action of Christians, both as individuals and as church and mission bodies still move overwhelmingly in denominational channels. Cooperation is still peripheral rather than central.

The sense of participation in a familiar community, small and intimate enough to foster a genuine sense of belonging is, of course a human trait that is just as operative in the religious field as anywhere else. The local congregation answers to this need. But human frailty and waywardness find expression in the universal tendency to strengthen the ties of one's own community by hedging it with a wall of prejudice that makes "foreigners" of everyone on the outside. The rampant rival nationalisms of our time which break humanity into irreconcilable fragments are a political expression of this dimension of human sinfulness. Sectarian rancor and strife are manifestations of the same sin in the religious field. Unless there is conscious repentance of this sin within the household of faith the Church will hardly be in a position to mediate the message of

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the all-embracing love of God in the world of nations. There is need within the Church for a fresh encounter with the Christ who came to "break down the middle wall of partition" by uniting His disciples in one body of which He Himself is Head. By this standard both Protestant and Roman churches are under judgment, even though the Roman Catholic Church believes itself to be the embodiment of Christ's purposes and can, in fact, point to a widely spread institution and to an imposing facade of unity. Protestantism's concept of the Church Universal remains remote and nebulous while the denomination is the operative body. A lesser loyalty usurps the place of the greater. The results of this weakness are apparent at many points, perhaps most vividly in relation to migrants and urbanized peoples. Wherever a Roman Catholic goes he finds the Church; whatever Order ministers to him in his new environment it is still the same Church and he is at home in it. The Protestant is not automatically at home. It is common practice for church and mission bodies to follow their migrants into the cities and towns, thus maintaining a linkage both with the home community and with the church body from which they came. But this practice emphasizes community at the congregational and denominational level at the expense of the total fellowship of the Church Universal. To entrust migrant members gladly and confidently to the churches already working in the city, and willingly to help those churches provide a more abundant ministry, is more in keeping with the unity in Christ which we profess.

The task before us is therefore not primarily one of strengthening the Christian Councils as operating agencies, important as that is. Basically it is the undergirding of the practice of cooperation with a more profound *ethos*. All unthinkingly but truly we describe broken sectarian segments as "your church" and "my church". Responsible Christian leadership today involves fresh apprehension of the Christian heritage which we all share together and a fresh uplifting of the Church Universal which is in Christ. And He being lifted up, will draw all men unto Him.

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